



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1707 | FAX (517) 373.3935

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/toy/

For Immediate Release
June 17, 2005

Contact: Heather Lombardini
517-373-1707

Sen. Toy fights to save school bus safety inspections from governor's ax

LANSING – School children and Michigan's School Bus Safety Inspection program moved one step closer to being protected from the governor's budget ax, announced state Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia.

The Senate passed a revised version of the Michigan State Police budget Thursday that rejects Gov. Jennifer Granholm's proposal to eliminate the program and to repeal the state law requiring school bus inspections.

"Parents and students have the right to expect that the buses carrying our children to school are in tip-top shape," Toy said. "Losing just one child in an accident that could have been prevented with an inspection is too high a cost to justify the savings the state will realize by cutting this program."

The governor's 2005-06 budget proposal called for the elimination of the State Police School Bus Inspection program, resulting in a projected savings of \$1.2 million. Additionally, the governor's proposal also called for repealing the state law that requires that school buses be inspected on a regular basis.

"During these tough budget times, we have an obligation to bring spending in line with revenues, but it is critical we do this in a responsible manner that protects critical services," Toy said. "I have heard from schools in my district who have been deeply concerned about the prospect of this cut and what it would do to their ability to transport students safely to and from school."

The program ensures that every Michigan school bus, more than 17,000 last year alone, is inspected annually by the State Police's expert maintenance crew.

According to a State Police report, approximately 4 percent, or more than 740 of the buses inspected last year, were "yellow tagged" – meaning they were found to have a defect that required repair within 60 days.

Last year, nearly 13 percent, or more than 2,100 buses, were "red tagged" – meaning they had defects so severe they were deemed unsafe to transport students and required immediate repair.

Without the statewide program, schools that want to have their buses inspected would have to perform the inspections on their own or find the funds to pay the state to do so. Or, if the governor's proposal to eliminate the state law mandating the inspections were approved, the schools could chose to not conduct the inspections at all.

"This is not acceptable," Toy said. "I will work hard to ensure those funds are there for the school children and their families, as well as for the bus drivers that drive our precious children on a daily basis."

###